

St. Peter's SIN,

And

True Repentance,

Amplified and Improved

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DISCOURSE

Occasion'd by the Publick Profession of *Repentance* made by *T. W.* who after Eleven Years Slavery in *Turkey*, Renounc'd his Baptism and Christianity there, and within a Year made his Escape, and returning first into *Holland*, desired Solemnly to Acknowledge his *Sin*, and Profess his *Repentance*, which he did in the *English Church at Rotterdam*, December the 3d 1687. where the following Sermon was then Preach'd.

By JOHN SHOWER.

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Luke 22. 60, 61, 62.

And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately while he yet spake, the Cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembred the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the Cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

THere is some little Difference among the Evangelists, in the Historical Account of this Passage, of the Sin and Repentance of Saint Peter. But because they
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give the same Account in Substance, though with a little variation one from the other, the one not knowing what the other had writ; 'tis an Argument that their Writings were not contrived by any Agreement with one another, and that there was no Design among them to cheat the World with a false Story, their Testimony is thereby *Distinct*, and of the more Authority. Now though two of the Evangelists make mention of the Apostle *Peters weeping bitterly*; yet Saint *Mark*, who was the Companion, and Scholar, and Amanuensis of *Peter*, and in whose Gospel the primitive Church agree that he had a hand, when he speaks of his Repentance, he only says, *He wept*; But when he speaks of his Sin, he aggravates the Circumstances of his Denial more than all the other Evangelists, *He began to curse, and to swear, I know not this Man of whom ye speak*, Mark 14. 71. but gives the most modest Account of his Repentance, says not, that he *wept bitterly*, but that *when He thought thereon, He*

who was the *Sagan* or Vicegerent under him, to supply his Place if there were Occasion. The High Priests *Hall*, not the Room where the *Sanhedrim* met, but some outer Room through which they passed, scituated somewhat higher, so that the Company above might look down upon the Servants and Officers below.

The *First Denial* of Chriff that the Apostle *Peter* is guilty of, was upon the Question of a Damsel that kept the Door, saying, *Art not thou one of his Disciples? Weren't Thou with Jesus of Galilee?* To whom he replies, *I know him not*, so one Evangelist hath it. *I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest*, says another Evangelist. And then he went out in the Court, and heard the Cock Crow, but takes no notice of that Warning.

As to the *Second Denial* of Peter, After a little while another saith unto him, *Thou also art One of them*, and he denied With an Oath, *I do not know the Man*. At first he only disowned his Disciplethip, but now he adds an Oath to confirm his lye.

and True Repentance.

About an hour after he is challenged again;
Verily Thou wast with Jesus of Galilee, Thou art a Galilean, and thy speech bewrayeth thee. The Dialect of the Galileans comes nearer to that of the Samaritan or Syrian Idiom, than that of the Jews dwelling at Jerusalem. There is some Difference in all Nations in pronouncing the same Language, by those who dwell in the chief Cities, and those who inhabit in the remoter Provinces. They call him *Jesus of Galilee*, as a Term of reproach, thereby denying him to be the true *Messiah*, who was to be born in *Judea* and not in *Galilee*: For out of *Galilee* ariseth no Prophet, *John* 461 52. That is, There is no Record of any Prophet that ever did arise from thence. The Christians were usually reviled by *Julian* the Apostate, under the Name of *Galileans*. But *Peter* denys that he appertains to *Jesus of Galilee*, or of *Nazareth*. And then the whole Company joyn with Him who first suspected him: For we read, *That they that stood by said, surely thou art One of them.* And among the rest, there happened to be One there, who was related to *Malchus*, whose ear *Peter* had smote off, and *Christ* had healed, as the Evangelist *John* relates it: And sayes

says, Did I not see thee in the Garden with him? But he denies it, and adds Cursing and Imprecation to gain credit to his perjury.

He began to curse and to swear, Some think that he cursed Christ, but it is more likely he Anathematized himself, that is, wished himself excluded from the Synagogue and the Church, if it were not true. Or, as others, that he wished himself an Eternal Separation from the Presence of God; or, in the Jewish Phrase, Let God do so to me, and more, if I am not a perfect stranger to the Man you talk of. / He wished in effect, that the Devil might take him, that God would destroy and damn him, if he were a Disciple of Jesus, or any way acquainted with Him. But our Lord looked back upon Peter, and the Cock crew a second time, and then he remembered the words of Jesus, saying, Before the Cock crew twice thou shalt deny me thrice; And he went out, and wept bitterly.)

But before I speak of his Repentance, Let us consider a little of the Aggravation of his Sin.

11 First, from the Person who is thus guilty of
 denying Christ, In what Rank he stood, What
 Character he bore, and under what Obligations
 he was to have acted otherwise. It was *Peter*;
 Not an ordinary Disciple, but an Apostle, One
 of the twelve, yea One of the chiefest of the
 Apostles, unto whom our Lord does often ad-
 dress his Discourse, as to the First and Principal
 of them. *Peter*, who had preached and Pro-
 phesied in the Name of Christ, who had wrought
 Miracles by his Power, cast out Devils by
 vertue of his Commission, yet He denies him.
Peter, who was admitted to more than ordinary
 familiarity and Friendship with our Lord; who
 was not only of his own House and Family, but
 had been favoured to be one of the three present
 at our Lords Transfiguration. *Peter*, who had
 hitherto forsaken all for the Interest of this
 Master, and hazarded his Life in his service;
 who had vowed, protested, so lately, so solemn-
 ly, that though all should deny him, yet he
 would not, but rather dye upon the spot
 than quit his Cause, or forsake his Company;
 Yet he denyes him. *Other*, who was so fully
 satisfied that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of
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the living God, that he asserts and declares it in the Name of all the Disciples, *Math. 16*. So that it might have been expected from him, that he should have been an Example of courage and Constancy to all the rest; Yet he deny's and forswears him, as if he had never seen him.

Secondly, Consider the Aggravations of his Sin, from the Person whom he deny's. He disowns any Relation to Christ the true Messiah, whom to know is eternal Life. He deny's any Acquaintance with him, who had obliged him so particularly, and by so many Instances of his kindness, who called him so strangely from his Nets to be a Fisher of Men; who had honoured him with a Commission to preach the Gospel, and confirmed it by Miracles; Who took him with James and John, to Mount Taber, when he appeared in his Glory; who condescended to let him walk upon the waters, and when he was sinking, to stretch forth his hand to secure him; Yet this kind and merciful Saviour he deny's and disowns, who had stooped but a little before to wash Peters feet, who permitted him to sit down with him at Table, to eat the Passover, and partake

take of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper ; And but a few hours before he permitted him to see part of his Agony in the Garden, and charged him to *watch and pray lest he enter into Temptation*, and awaked him three several times out of Sleep, with a Repetition of that command ; *Watch and Pray* : Yea, but a little before he made the Multitude fall to the Ground by the force of a mild Expression, *I am He* ; and wrought a Miracle in his Sight, in the sudden Restitution of *Malchus* Ear by a touch, which *Peter* had unadvisedly cut off : And yet after all this, he denies his Lord and Saviour, who had given such proofs of his Divinity before his Eyes.

Thirdly, Consider *before whom* he denies him, in what Company, before what Witnesses : The Scribes, and Pharisees, and Chief Priests, and Elders of the Jews, could not but rejoyce, That One Disciple of Christ should betray him for money, and Another deny, and forswear him through fear. The High Priests Servants, and the common People of the Jews, could not but be hardened and prejudiced against Christ and his Doctrine, by such an Instance. And if

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there were any secret, hidden, half Disciples, such who were almost perswaded to be Christians ; it must needs shake and stagger their Faith, to find such a One, as *Peter*, revolt so shamefully.

Fourthly, Consider the *smallness* of the *Temptation*, especially to his *first* Denial. A Damsel only asked him the Question, whether he was not one of Christs Disciples ; and some think, rather out of *Pity*, than Reproach : And yet he feares to own it. Had the sight of Armed Souldiers, come to apprehend and seize him, put him into a fright ; Had he been examined before the Sanhedrim, or terrified by the threatnings of the High Priest ; Had he been bound, and led away to Judgment, before the Roman Deputy ; Had there been a Prospect of an ignominious painful Death, from the Roman Souldiers, As the Consequence of his owning his Relation to Christ ; something might be pleaded on his Behalf. But to disown his Acquaintance with him, and Relation to him, at the question of an inconsiderable Servant to the High Priest, that only kept the Door, the smallness of the Temptation was an Aggravation of the Fault.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The *Repetition* of his Denial was another Aggravation of it. He not only denies him, but swears to it that he knows him not; he confirms it by an Oath, calls the God of Truth to bear witness to his Lye, That he knew not Christ, with whom he had conversed so long and so familiarly, and from whom he so lately parted. And again he denies him with the Imprecation of a dreadful *Anathema* on himself, in case he asserted a Falshood.

Sixthly, How many other complicated Sins were implied in this Fault of Peter? The highest Ingratitude to his Master, unpardonable Rashness, in venturing into such Company, and tarring there so long, and without a call making bold with Temptation: For our Lord had not appointed his Disciples to follow him, but bad them Watch and Pray; He had dismissed them, and appointed a Place to meet after his Resurrection. There was likewise shameful Unbelief, in distrusting the Knowledge, or the Power of Christ, to have assisted him. There was a base Cowardise, To disown him in such a manner. And for a time, there was Impenitence and hardness of Heart, so as

not to take the first Warning by the Crowing of the Cock, But vvhhen the Cock crewv a second time, *Our Lord looked upon Peter, and he remembered the words of Jesus, and went out, and wept bitterly.*

JOH. 1. He *went out.* Though Calvin and Others condemn him for going out, and think he had done better to have tarried, and ovvned his Master, in the presence of that Company before vvhom he had denyed him ; Yet vvhhen vve knowv that his Repentance vvas unfeigned, and accepted vvith God, We ought to put the best Construction upon such a Passage : And therefore I vvould rather consider it as a proof of his Repentance : For,

JOH. 1. We may impute it to his *Zeal*, and *Affection* to Christ. Could he love him as he did, and be sensible of his guilt in having denyed him, and yet bear to see the outrage and Violence that vvas offered to his Master ? Howv can vve suppose, that he could indure to tarry in so detestable a Place, to be a Witness to the Affronts offered to his Lord ! to hear him scorned, and reviled, and reproached, and blasphemed ? This might make him retire from
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that wicked Crew, to mourn in secret.

2. We may ascribe it to the greatness of his *Remorse* and *sorrow*, and penitent *shame*, for his late Apostacy. He could not but be greatly ashamed of his Ingratitude to so good a Master, and blush to look him in the Face, Considering that he so lately denied to have ever seen him. What else could be expected, but that shame and sorrow would make him choose Retirement, to vent his Grief by Tears, and pour out his Soul before the Lord in secret? Solitariness is certainly most agreeable to an afflicted Spirit, *Isay. 22. 4. Look away from me, I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the Daughter of my People. John 20. 11. Mary stood without, at the Sepulcher, weeping.* Unobserved Privacy is most eligible under any great Passion of Grief or shame: But here is a Conjunction of both. It is an Argument of his Sincerity, to retire in secret to mourn. He cannot well be thought to dissemble his Grief, who chuses no other Witness but the Omnipresent God.

3. It may be attributed to his *Prudence*, and Discretion. Considering the Malice and
Fury

Fury with which they proceeded against Christ, he could not rationally expect if he were known to be a Disciple of Christ by an open declaration of him, to meet with much better Entertainment than his Master had; and thereby he might lose the opportunity of testifying his sincere Repentance, by his future Diligence and Resolution in preaching the Gospel.

Besides, what Service could he render his Master by so bold an Action? What Obligation was he under to hazard his Life, when there was no apparent Necessity to warrant his doing so? Especially having such late experience of his own Weakness, notwithstanding his former Resolutions of Constancy. He was bound both in *Prudence*, and in *Conscience* to avoid Temptation, and therefore to quit the Place and Company, where he had met with the Temptation that occasioned his Fall. He did well therefore, that he went out. But that is not all, For

Secondly, There is a second proof of the sincerity of his Repentance, Which, is his Bitter weeping; He went out, and wept bitterly. Not only is the secrecy and retirement that

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He chose for his sorrow, an Argument of his Sincerity ; But we are likewise to consider, That this his Grief was extraordinary, and his Tears abundant, As the Phrase of weeping bitterly does import, and is so used in other Places, *I say. 22. 14. Chap.*

33. 7. * Doubtless with his Tears, was joyned a free and hearty confession of his Sin, Bewailing his Folly, Acknowledging his offence,

** You that are come here to testify your Repentance for having denied Christ, and renounced your Faith in Turkey, ought to take notice of this, and imitate the repentance of Peter as I hope you do.*

Earnestly imploring Pardon and Forgiveness For if his Grief was too big for words, we may well perceive the inward Remorse of his Conscience, and smart Reflections he made on himself, to some such purpose as this,

‘ O my Soul ! What have I done ? Have I
‘ denied and abjured the Author of Eternal
‘ Life, for fear of a temporal Death ? Did I
‘ not once acknowledge Christ to be the Son of
‘ the living God ? And have I since denied him
‘ with Oaths, and Curses, and Imprecations ?
‘ Did I not promise to lay down my Life for
‘ his sake, and though all should forsake him,
yet

' yet I would not ; And have I yet disowned
 ' and denyed him, at the voice of a Damsel ?
 ' O what Unfaithfulness ; what Weakness !
 ' what Wickedness ! Thus to deny and for-
 ' swear my Lord ! Have I denied thee, O my
 ' Saviour ! before the
 * *And you may say so as* ' wicked * Jews ? and
to the Mahometans and ' may'st not thou justly
 Turks. ' deny me before thy
 ' Father and his Holy Angels ? Did I disown
 ' that I ever knew thee ? And may'st not Thou,
 ' at the great Day, bid me depart amongst the
 ' Workers of Iniquity ; saying, I know you
 ' not. Did I joyn my self in Company with
 ' thy Haters, and Despisers, and Murtherers ?
 ' And may I not be rejected, condemned, and
 ' punished with them ? O that my Head were
 ' a Fountain, that I might weep continually !
 ' That the Fault of one Night might be La-
 ' mented by me all the days of my Life. Lord,
 ' was I not warned, and cautioned, and ex-
 ' pressly foretold, that my Confidence would
 ' betray me, and let me fall ? And yet so fool-
 ' ish was I and ignorant, so heedless and un-
 ' wary, so unmindful of thy Friendly Admo-
 nitions,

‘ nitions, so forgetful of thy Monitory Prediction, as thus literally to fulfil it by my
‘ Triple Denial.

To this purpose we may suppose he did accuse and condemn himself, and that with the deepest Remorse and Anguish of Spirit, which his Tears do more than intimate ; owning himself an Apostate Wretch, a Condemned Malefactor, unworthy to live, a Son of Death ; To whom the common Light of the World was too great a Favour, and outer, everlasting Darkness a deserved Portion.

Thirdly, But this is not all : For he further testified his Repentance by his Carriage and Behaviour * afterward. That

in two Particulars. 1. By the lively Remembrance of that Sin, and Humble Confession of it upon all Occasions.

** And you that now profess your Repentance here, for having renounced Christ and Christianity, ought to take notice of this.*

2. By more than ordinary forwardness and zeal, to testify his Love to Christ and propagate the Faith of the Gospel.

1. By the lively Remembrance of that Sin, and humble Confession of it. It is reported in Ecclesiastical History, that ever after, when this

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Apostle

Apostle heard the Crowing of a Cock, he would either fall upon his knees, or in some other manner express his Repentance, and bless God for his Recovery. Others say, that he was wont to rise at Midnight, and spend the time between Cock-crowing and Day-light, in penitent Devotion. We find something agreeable to this in the Instance of *David*, after his Adultery and Murther, *Psal. 6. 6. I made my bed to swim, and watered my Couch all night with my Tears.* His *Bed* brought to Remembrance his Adultery with *Bathsheba*; and his *Couch* revived the Thoughts of his Murther of *Uriah*, For we find him on his Couch when he Signed the Order for the Death of *Uriah*. The *Romanists*, who are apt to turn every thing into Superstition, began that practice of placing a Cock upon the top of Towers and Steeples, to put people in mind of this Sin of *Peter*, and his Repentance, by that Signal.

2. The truth of his Repentance was confirmed, by his extraordinary *Zeal* and *Forwardness* afterward, to express his *Love to Christ*, and propagate the Christian Faith. It is true, we do not find that after he went out from the
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High Priests Hall, that ever he saw his Master again, till he was risen from the Dead : But we find that he came early in the Morning on the Third day unto the Sepulcher, and was the *First* that went down into it, *John* 20. 6. And we find him desirous to testifie a peculiar Affection to his Master, *John* 21. *begin*. For when *Peter* and the other Disciples were fishing at the Sea of *Tiberias*, our Lord appears on the shoar. The Apostle *John* said unto *Peter*, *It is the Lord*, ver. 7. Then *Peter*, to make haste to meet him, only girts his Coat about him, and casts himself into the Sea ; while the other Disciples, not above Two Hundred Cubits from Land, come by Ship to meet him. After a short Dinner, it may be past in Silence ; for we read in the *Twelfth* Verse, that when *Jesus* said unto him, *Come and Dine*, yet none of the Disciples durst ask him, *Who art thou ?* seeing they knew he was the Lord. But *Jesus* says unto *Simon Peter*, *Lovest thou me more than these ?* He answered, *Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*. And being asked again, he replies, *Thou knowest that I love thee*. And being asked a third time, he answers, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest*
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that I love thee. Professing his Love three several times, as he had been guilty of a Triple Denial.

Whereupon our Lord minds him of what he had formerly said, That when he was converted he should strengthen his Brethren ; and therefore puts him upon this Evidence of his sincere Repentance and Love to Christ, *Feed my Lambs, Feed my Sheep.* Though thou hast denied and disowned the Shepherd of thy Soul, yet feed my Sheep : Let this be the first Testimony of thy Love, which afterwards thou must confirm with the loss of thy Life, and seal with thy Bloud. And by the History of the Acts of the Apostles, we find his extraordinary Diligence to spread the Gospel : For the Travels of this Apostle in his Ministerial work, are computed to be above Nine Hundred and Fifty Miles.

'Tis an Instance of the Wisdom of Divine Providence, that this Apostle should be sent principally to Preach the Gospel to the *Jews*, and be the Minister of the Circumcision, who had thus joined with the Jews in disowning Christ ; that he should endeavour to perswade them

them to join with him in *Repentance*, as he had joined with them in Sin. And the Parallel may be carried further, As Dr. Jackson. the Nation of the Jews had known the Lord above all other People, had seen his Wonders, and been favoured by peculiar Instances of his Kindness, stood in special Relation to Him, and made the highest Profession of Love and Obedience, and expected the coming of the Son of God ; Yet when he came amongst them, they disowned his Authority, and protested against him, We have no King but *Cæsar*, &c. So the Apostle *Peter*, though he had seen our Saviour, and lived in his Family, and been Witness to his Miracles ; was nearly related to him, and professed more than ordinary Affection and Obedience ; Yet he basely disowned him, when it came to the Trial. *His Sin* was in some respect like *Theirs*, and therefore he is the fittest Person to Preach the Gospel to them. His Diligence therein is another Argument of the Sincerity of his Repentance.

The Application follows ; For *Instruction*, and *Practice*.

1. From

1. From the very Relation of this Passage of the Scandalous Fall of one of the Apostles, and the particular Description of it by the Apostles themselves, We may learn one Argument to confirm the Truth of the Gospel History. Had it been a Forgery, or Humane Contrivance, these things would have been concealed: But the Spirit of God has left this upon Record, to warn us against the like Sins, and to encourage the Repentance of those that have fallen in an Hour of Temptation. We may observe farther

From the Sin and Fall of this Apostle, What little Reason the Church of Rome has to boast of the pretended Succession of their Popes to the Apostle Peter. They are his Successors in denying Christ the Glory due to him as Mediator, but in vain do they pretend to be the universal Bishops of the universal Church as his Successors. We read of no such Superiority that Peter had over the rest of the Apostles; Not till Christs Ascension to be sure, for then there would have been two heads of the Church. Nor afterward: For he was only the Apostle of the Circumcision. And St. Paul the Doctor of
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the *Gentiles*, withstood him to the Face, and ordained Pastors without him, and tells us he was not inferiour to the chiefest Apostles. *Gal. 2. and 2 Cor. 11. 5.* And

Peter was sent as a Messenger from the rest of the Apostles, *Acts 8. 14.* And when he was accused, he pleads his own Cause before the other Disciples, and submits to the Judgment of the Council, *Acts 11.* Moreover when there were Divisions in the Church of *Corinth*, that some were for *Paul*, and some for *Apollos*, and some for *Cephas*, or *Peter*; We do not find the Apostle *Paul* directs them to Center all in *Peter*; He owns no such Authority and Supremacy in him above others, as the Church of *Rome* have invested him and his Successors in. The Bishops of *Rome* have imitated *Peter* too much in the Denial of *Christ*, but in little else that we know of. Again,

From the Sin and Fall of *Peter*, We may observe the Subtlety of the Devil, to suit his Temptations to the particular Tempers of Men; and so to season and time his Temptations, as to have the greatest probability of Success. He takes confident *Peter* in a fit of Fear

Fear at the Apprehension and Arraignment of his Master ; who at another time would have replied to the Devil, as Christ did to him when he acted the Devils Part, *Get thee behind me Satan.* Our great Adversary the Devil knows how to assault us with suitable Temptations, and in what Circumstances we are most likely to yeild ; we had therefore need to watch and stand upon our guard.

We may also observe the Justice of God, in permitting the strongest *Confidence* to be shamed and baffled. Let us therefore remember, that none are so likely to enter into Temptation, and be overcome, as those who are least afraid of it. None are more likely to fall, than those who are most confident of their own standing. None more ready to yeild to Temptation, than such as presume they shall never yeild. Moreover,

In that after *Peter's* first Denyal he heard the Cock crow, and did not take warning, we may learn, That whoever sins against the Light of his own Mind and Conscience, may be so far hardened and stupified by it, as that the plainest warnings, for a time at least, shall be disregarded, and have no influence. One would wonder,

der, after what Christ had told him concerning his Denial before the Crowing of the Cock, that he did not recollect it when he first heard the Cock to Crow.

We may further learn, That there is a Mixture of Flesh and Spirit, of Corruption and Grace, in the best Saints. I doubt not, but Peter's Resolution to dye with Christ, rather than deny him, proceeded from a Principle of Grace and true Affection to his Lord. I question not, but he verily thought he should do as he said; but his Confidence of himself, whereby he presumed on his own strength, had a sinful mixture with it, which occasioned his Fall. It therefore concerns all, even the best men, that they watch and pray, lest they enter into Temptation.

But considering, That though the Sin of Peter was great, yet his Repentance was not long delayed; We may compare it with some other Instances in Scripture, and observe, That Sins, by the surprizal of a sudden Temptation, are much sooner repented of, than where the Sin is presumptuous, deliberate and contrived. Let us take the Instance of David, in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah, and compare it with this Example of Peter.

Peter knew so well that he should not deny

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his Lord, that he was confident he never should. He honoured his Master in his Heart, and came to the High-Priests Hall with a Resolution of Constancy ; but denied him, to decline a present apprehended Danger, under a violent Passion of Fear ; Which was not so deliberate and presumptuous a Sin, as David's Adultery and Murther : For he continued in his Adultery with *Bathsheba* for a long Time ; and in order to the Secrecy of it, gave command concerning the Death of *Uriah* the Husband ; and that not in an hasty Passion, or in a sudden surprize ; but in cool blood, with many a deliberate thought about it. Now as there was a great difference in their Sin, so as to the time of their Recovery. *St. Peter* took the warning of the second Crowing of the Cock, and immediately goes forth to express his Repentance ; but *David* continued almost a Twelve-Month without any solemn Repentance, that we read of, after such a Fault, and till the Prophet *Nathan* comes to him, and is forced to tell him, *Thou art the Man*. Again,

From *Peter's* taking the Warning of the second Crowing of the Cock, when he was not awakened by the first, We may observe, That the
same

same Means, which men have had for a time and not profited by, may yet, through the Blessing of God, be afterwards effectual, if they be continued or vouchsafed again. Let such as have long enjoyed the Means of Grace, and have not profited, bless God that they are yet continued, and beg the Influence of the Spirit, that at length they may be effectual. You that for many years have sat under the Preaching of the Word, that every Lords Day, and frequently on the Week Days, are called to Repentance, and yet have been unprofitable Hearers hitherto; you ought not to forbear your Attendance on the Publick Worship, because the same Truths which have been heard at one Time with little Profit, at another may come with Power and Efficacy to your Souls.

Lastly. You may take notice of the Mercy and Love of Christ to his poor Disciple, and of his Faithfulness to his Promise.

1. His Mercy and Love to his poor Disciple. He forgets not *Peter*, when He himself was apprehended and brought to Judgment, amidst the Calumnies and false Accusations, the Injuries and Indignities which our Lord met with, yet he remembers *Peter*, and turns about, and gives him a gracious Look, that melted his

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Heart,

Heart, and recalls him to Repentance. Certainly he hath not less Kindness for his Followers now he is in Heaven, than he had while he was upon Earth.

2. Observe his *Faithfulness* to his *Promise*, and the *Prevalency* of his *Prayer* for Peter. Satan, says our Lord, *has desired to have thee, and to sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not, Ver. 31.* of this Chapter. And therefore though he was permitted to Fall, to humble him for his Confidence, and to warn us by his Example, and to teach more Watchfulness and Circumspection; yet his Faith did not finally fail, but he is recovered again by a speedy and deep Repentance. And there is no true Christian but is interested in this Promise, and shall share in the Prevalency of the Intercession of Christ: His Faith shall not finally fail; He that hath begun a good Work, will carry it on: He that is the Author of Divine Faith, will be the Rewarder and Finisher of it.

For Direction as to *Practice*. From what has been said, we may learn

To take heed of the *Beginnings* of Sin. If the Devil have once got the advantage of Peter, by his *first* Denial of Christ, he shall quickly be tempted
to

to deny him again ; If he yield to one Temptation, he shall soon meet with more and stronger. At first only a Damsel asks the Question, but afterwards the whole Company accuse him as a Follower of Christ. He that will venture upon a Lye, shall be tempted to tell another to conceal the first, and to add Perjury and Imprecation to prevent discovery. The breaking of our good Purposes and Resolutions in one Instance, will make way for our doing so in many others. As *David* from Adultery proceeded to Murther, and *Lot* from Drunkenness to Incest ; and *Peter* here from a bare Denial to Perjury, and Cursing, and Imprecation. The admission of one Link of a Chain will make way for more. And without watching against the beginnings of Sin, they will soon multiply ; as one curling Circle in the Water produces a second, and so a third, of a larger size and figure than it self. When you yield to any Temptation of the Devil, you know not where you shall stop, you give him an advantage against you, you Weaken and Harden your own Hearts, stifle Conscience, and lay your selves more open unto Temptation, and your Resistance will still be weaker.

TO 2. Let us heartily pity those, who by the
fur-

surprise of a great Temptation have sinned like

** We have a sad Instance of one of our Country-men, now before us, who renounc'd his Baptism and Christianity in an hour of Temptation.*

Peter, in denying their * Lord.

Let us not presently censure and condemn them of *the Sin against the Holy Ghost*, or of sinning wilfully after the Knowledge of the Truth, in such a manner, as that it should be impossible for them to be renewed again to Repentance. Let us rather pray for them, that it be not a *Sin unto Death*,

** As we have in the present Case,*

Especially when we have any Instance of their * Repentance. For the Sin unto Death, and the Sin against the Holy Ghost, exclude Repentance, such as are guilty do never repent.

3. Let us not be high-minded, but fear; and while we stand, take heed lest we fall. Did an Apostle, and so great an Apostle, Deny and Forswear his Lord? and that so soon after he had been at the Lords Table, which was but the Night before, or but some few hours before? And shall any of us be confident of our own Courage and Constancy? How many Instances are there of those who have shamefully fallen in an hour of Temptation, of such as have renounc'd their Christianity in Turkey and received the Impostures of Mahomet; Of many

many more in *Popish* Countries, that have abjured the Reformed Religion, to comply with the Superstitions and Impurities of *Rome*? Many such there are, who once thought themselves as unlikely to do so, as any of us can now think that we are: And shall we be Positive and Certain, Confident and Presumptuous, that, though we had all their Temptations, we should not do as they? Had not *Peter*, think you, more Reason to think and hope well of himself, and to believe that he should rather *Dye with Christ, than Deny him*; than any of us have? Thanks be to God, you do not yet meet with the Temptations that others have experienced, and that there is no near prospect that you shall meet with such Temptations; yea I rejoyce in the hope that many of us would be assisted and enabled by God, rather to dye for Christ, than deliberately to abjure, and deny him; But let us not be confident in our selves; The Instance of this Text should make us humble and cautious, and fill us with a *Holy Fear*, because they who are able to stand their ground against some sorts of Temptation, may yield and be overcome by others.

4. Let us all reflect with shame and sorrow upon our selves, That in too great a degree we have
imitated

imitated the Sin of Peter. We have denied our Lord as well as he; tho' not after the same manner, yet with as high Aggravations, and sometimes more criminal ones. Have we not denied Christ by our Actions, though not by our Words? By having a form of Godliness, but denying the Power of it: *Tit. 1. 16.* By professing to know God and Christ, when in Works we deny and dishonour him, *2 Tim. 3. 5.* We have not been scared from the Profession of his Name and Truth, by threatening Dangers, and the fear of Suffering; yet have we not forsaken and disowned him, by the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, contrary to our Baptismal Covenant? Though we are not Apostates by a formal Abjuration of his Holy Religion, as to Doctrine and Worship; yet do we not practically contradict the Principles and Rules of it?

Do you not deny him to be *King*, by not kissing his Scepter, submitting to his Authority, and keeping his Commandments; by not walking as his Servants and Subjects, in universal Faithful Obedience, according to the Oath and Covenant we are under. Do you not deny him to be the Great *High Priest*, by not depending on his Merito-

Meritorious Righteousness, and prevailing Intercession, as the Ground of your Acceptance with God, for Pardon of Sin and Eternal Life? Do you not Deny him to be the Great Prophet, by chosen Ignorance, and wilful unbelief, under all the Teachings of his Word, and Spirit? Notwithstanding the bright Revelation of his Gospel that we enjoy, and have so long enjoyed? Do we not deny and disown him to be our Lord, and Head, and Captain, and Saviour, by thwarting his Example, and refusing to walk in his Steps? For Instance, by Drunkenness and Gluttony, when He was the greatest Example of Temperance and exact Sobriety: By Haughtiness and Pride, when he has left us a Pattern of the deepest Humility: By Covetousness and Uncharitableness, and want of Compassion to the Poor; when Charity, and Love, and Kindness towards all was exemplified in his whole Course.

Yea there are many who profess themselves Christians, who not only Deny Christ, as Peter; but betray him, as Judas. Who sell their Consciences for Temporal Profit, and the gain of a little Money; Who undervalue the Blood of the Redeemer, and all the Riches of his Grace, for thirty pieces of Silver; preferring their Ease, and Honour, and Wealth, before his Presence and

Favour, &c. Who is there, *my Brethren*, that has not in some sense sinned *like Peter*, with the like *Aggravations* as his Fault was attended with? Have we not sinned *after the knowledge* of the Truth, after we have confessed that *Jesus* is the Lord; after we have owned him to be *our Lord*, and *our Jesus*; *after* we have promised and protested by *Baptism*, and frequently since by the repetition of that Covenant at the *Lords Table*, that we would obey and serve him as long as we live? Have we not denied and dishonoured him, *after* we have been adopted into the Family of God, and enjoyed the Privileges of his House; *after* eminent and special Mercies, and peculiar Favours, as well as *Peter*; *after* we have been convinced, and awakened, and resolved, and begun well, and held out against Temptation for a little while? Have none of us *after this* revolted from Christ, and returned to folly? Have you not retracted your vow, contradicted your Experience, dishonoured the Holy Name by which you are called, and denied the Lord of Glory, that so willingly was a Sacrifice for you? Yea have you not been called to Repentance again and again, by the Preaching of the Word, as well as *Peter* by the crowing of the Cock, and yet remain impenitent to this Day?

Nay

Nay further, Many of our *Sins* are more aggravated than the Sin of *Peter*, *Peter* denied Christ, it is true; but it was in the House of *Caiaphas*; But some of us deny him even in his own House and Temple. *Peter* denied him, but it was in the midst of *Enemies*; But we do so in his own *Family*, amongst his Disciples, and Children, which is an higher Aggravation of our Sin, than his*. *Peter* denied him, but it was when his Spirit was overwhelmed with fear, and surprizing Trouble; Whereas we deny and disobey him, in the midst of Peace and Plenty. *Peter* denied him, but it was under the Apprehension of a Temporal and cruel Death, that might be the Consequence of Owning him; But blessed be God we have no such Temptation: On the contrary, if we deny him, it is in despite of the threatening of temporal and eternal Death. So that our Apostacy from Christ, and practical denial of him, is more criminal in several respects, than the Fault of *Peter*.

* And this poor Man in Turkish Slavery, under great and sore Temptations, which he long resisted.

Lastly. Therefore as we have imitated his *Sin*, let us imitate him in his *Repentance* too. We have heard that the *Second* Call awakened him to *Repentance*, when our Lord looked upon him; But how many Calls from God have some of us had? how often hath Christ looked upon and spoke to us? and knocked at the Door of our Hearts by his Spirit? Shall we not then obey his Voice to repent? As soon as *Peter* remembered his Sin, you have heard that he left the *Place* where he contracted his guilt, he avoided the *Company* that had been a snare to him. Oh imitate him in this, continue not to frequent such *Places*, and such *Company*, where you have been ensnared, and defiled, and met with prevailing Temptations to sin.

Con-

Concerning *Peter* you have heard, that he expressed his *Repentance* by bitter *Weeping*; Oh imitate him in this, and not only say you are sorry; but give some convictive *Sign* and *Evidence* of it, that you do in earnest *Repent*, and bring forth fruits meet for *Repentance*. Concerning *Peter*, you have heard that he manifested the *truth* of his *Repentance*, by his future zeal and Diligence, by his extraordinary Love to Christ, and Concern for his Honour, and Fidelity in his Service: O follow his *Example*, if you would ever have the Comfort and Reward of *unfeigned Repentance*; and not onely sin no more, but be doubly *diligent* in circumspect, and holy walking.

'Tis sad to consider, how much *formal, superficial, counterfeit Repentance* there is in the World. Men say they are sorry they have done amiss, they acknowledge their Faults, and it may be fetch a sigh, or mutter a Groan, or drop a Tear, in a serious mood, or upon some solemn occasion; But in a few Days, it may be looner, are the same again; The Convictions, and serious Impressions, they had upon the *Lords-day*, are very often lost and gone, before the return of the *next Sabbath*; The Vows and Resolutions they make at the *Lords Table*, are not remembered and observed for an entire *Moneth*, but there is sad work for a new *Repentance*, before the monthly Season comes about. After solemn Professions of *Repentance*, they are as bold and venturous upon Temptation as ever, as unmindful of their holy vows as ever; as careless and fearless, and so as easie a Prey to the Devil, as before. Have you not reason to reflect upon this? and therefore to go home, and weep bitterly, as *Peter* did? This would be a happy improvement of this *Example*. The Lord grant it may have such Effects. Amen.

FINIS